



visit **Eau Claire**

## Vacation Starters

### outdoor adventurer

**STAY:** Lake Wissota State Park, where you can pitch a tent or roll up in your camper. There's no better way to get in touch with Wisconsin's great outdoors.

**EAT:** Grab a hot sandwich and some cold curds from Nelson's Cheese Factory and make it a picnic at Lowes Creek County Park.

**DO:** When you're done exploring Lake Wissota, rent a kayak, canoe or bike and soak in the beauty of the Chippewa and Eau Claire Rivers, either by way of the Chippewa River State Trail or the rivers themselves. Eau Claire is French for "clear water," after all. Stop for an evening drink at The Lakely restaurant and learn how to play Kubb - a lawn game that's best described as a combination of bowling and horseshoes - on the outdoor patio there.

**SHOP:** Beaver Creek Reserve Gift Shop, where you can grab some books and learn about regional animals and forestry. Fan out and explore the many miles of trails that criss-cross the reserve while you're there. If you're visiting in the winter, take part in a candlelit snowshoe hike. Peel off some time to get in touch with your minimalist side when you shop at Red's Mercantile, where organic jewelry designs and elegantly simple home décor items grace the shelves.

**BEST TIME TO VISIT:** Mid-September through Mid-October, just as the leaves are sporting their most vibrant fall colors.

**PHOTO OP:** The Top of the World at Mount Simon - tricky to find, worth it for the picture. Easiest access: park your vehicle on Snelling Ct. and follow the path to the top.

### family first

**STAY:** Metropolis Resort, because they have a trampoline park, a water park, zipline, laser tag AND Action City. They say the fun never stops here and we believe them.

**EAT:** The Plus has arcade games for the kids and a full bar for the parents, so yes, please!

**DO:** You mean when you're not exploring all the fun zones at Metropolis Resort? You'll definitely want to get digested in the Body Smarts Exhibit at the Children's Museum of Eau Claire. Check out the family-friendly flicks playing at the Downtown Micon Cinema and revel in the \$4 admission (yes, you read that right). Not feeling popcorn? Snack on some peanuts and crackerjacks at an Eau Claire Express baseball game in Carson Park. Swing, batter, swing!

**SHOP:** The Local Store carries Wisconsin-themed children's books, novels written by local authors, river-inspired candles and a plethora of apparel items you can only find in Eau Claire.

**BEST TIME TO VISIT:** Early July. Plan your trip around the Downtown Eau Claire Family Day with live music, opportunities to learn about the rivers, a parade you can be part of, as well as an outdoor family movie at dusk.

**INSIDER TIP:** Get some ice cream at Ramone's to cool down from the warmth of the summer sun.

## foodie

**STAY:** Staybridge Suites is in close proximity to River Prairie Park, home to some of Eau Claire's tastiest restaurants, including Za51 and Cowboy Jack's, not to mention the pop-up food trucks that are the essence of all things tasty.

**SHOP:** Just Local Food Cooperative has the most knowledgeable co-op staff you may ever meet. They know their farmers and they want to tell you all about them.

**BREAKFAST:** The Lakely menu is brimming with seasonal offerings and local ingredients, which means you will want to come back AT LEAST twice a year.

**LUNCH:** Singha Thai Cuisine is known for its Chicken Pad Thai, but you can't go wrong with any of their curry dishes.

**DINNER:** The Informalist. Four words: GET-THE-MUSHROOM-BURGER. Locally sourced food means an ever-evolving menu. OR get the classic supper club experience with a twist at Houligan's downtown. Did somebody say maple old fashioned?

**DESSERT:** Mona Lisa's, because you'll deserve a wonderful glass of wine to pair with the sweets.

**QUENCH:** Eau dang, you've got options. Go for a classic German beer at Lazy Monk, try a creative brew at The Brewing Projekt, or skip right to the signature cocktails at Dive.

**BEST TIME TO VISIT:** Restaurant Week in September, of course.

**BONUS POINTS:** If you're in town on a Thursday, we highly recommend 2-for-1 burgers at Court n' House. Try the Mel Burger and your life will never be the same.

## indie music lover

**STAY:** The Oxbow Hotel, where they have live music five days a week. There's also a Vinyl Vinyasa Yoga Series. Oh, and it's owned in part by the frontman of Bon Iver, Justin Vernon.

**EAT:** The Lakely, where you can listen to some live jazz while sipping on one of their craft cocktails. That's called doing it right.

**SHOP:** Revival Records was designated by "Vinyl Me, Please" record club as the best record store in Wisconsin. Need we say more?

**DO:** Catch a show at The Mousetrap, The Plus, or Phoenix Park. Maybe there's even a house show happening - just ask around.

**BEST TIME TO VISIT:** The failsafe answer would be during Eaux Claires Festival, but really there's no wrong time for indie music lovers to hang out in Eau Claire. Consider the weekly outdoor music events in the summer such as Sounds Like Summer at Phoenix Park. And the late-night rock shows at The Mousetrap. And Blue Ox Festival also has our hearts.

**PHOTO OP:** In front of the Bon Iver "21, A Million" mural (of course). You can find it at the corner of Farwell and Eau Claire Streets.

**BONUS PHOTO OP:** Baroque, the towering pipe organ sculpture created for the second annual Eaux Claires music festival. It's now located at the corner of First and Grand Avenues.

## art connoisseur

**STAY:** The Lismore Hotel is a piece of art in itself, and it's just steps away from many Eau Claire galleries, such as B-Framed, 200 Main, and The Local Store Gallery.

**EAT:** Mona Lisa's, where the vibe is artful and the carefully crafted food is a masterpiece for the tastebuds.

**DO:** Eau Claire Sculpture Tour is a 24/7, free outdoor exhibit that changes each spring, bringing new artistic talent from all over the world to street level.

**SHOP:** Artist Market at Phoenix Park is where artisans from around the area gather near the confluence of the two rivers to sell their latest creations. If you're not in town during Artist Market season (or even if you are), make sure Tangled Up in Hue makes it onto your agenda. This artful haven is filled with handmade goods and is frequented by the artists who made them. Looking for a taste of uptown Eau Claire? Catch local artists in action while browsing the Gallery at Artisan Forge Studios.

**BEST TIME TO VISIT:** Summer, when there is no shortage of fantastically artful summer events in Eau Claire, from Eaux Claires Festival to ChalkFest to the Eau Claire Dance Festival. You name the medium, we've got it covered.

**INSIDER TIP:** Keep an eye out for mysterious Mona Lisa prints on historic buildings throughout downtown. These were used as a marketing ploy when Lisa Aspenson opened her restaurant "Mona Lisa's" in 1994.

## history buff

**STAY:** Otter Creek Inn, a B&B with character where the warmest of Wisconsin welcomes comes at no additional charge.

**EAT:** Amber Inn is a darling of TripAdvisor reviewers, with visitors naming it the "oldest and the best" and another proclaiming they have the "best burgers in EC."

**DO:** Timber Trails Audio Tours guide you through a scenic drive of the Chippewa Valley, revealing the hidden history that exists throughout.

**LEARN:** Study up on Eau Claire's logging and agricultural history when you spend some time at Carson Park checking out the Chippewa Valley Museum as well as the Paul Bunyan Logging Camp. Learn how the rivers of Eau Claire became the city's most important assets.

**SHOP:** Antique Emporium, located in the heart of downtown. Three Stories. SO. MANY. ANTIQUES.

**CROSS:** Seven footbridges connect the hip neighborhoods of Eau Claire, crossing the Chippewa and Eau Claire Rivers along the way. Each bridge, with some dating back to the late-19th century, has its own historical significance in connecting the community through transportation and beauty.

**BEST TIME TO VISIT:** Fall. Make this trip right after the leaves begin to fall and that scenic drive we mentioned above is bound to take your breath away.